23/05/2024

Remarks By Archbishop Elpidophoros of America At the 46th AHEPA Biennial Congressional Banquet



Beloved friend, Savas Tsivicos, Supreme President of the Order of AHEPA,

General Chairman, Philip Christopher,

Most Honorable Senators and Representatives of the United States Congress,

Your Excellency Ekaterini Nassika, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic to the United States,

Your Excellency Evangelos Savva, Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the United States,

Representatives of Greece and Cyprus,

Master of Ceremonies, Mike Emmanuel

Most Esteemed Presenters, Guests and Dignitaries,

Reverend Clergy,

Dear Friends of the AHEPA Family,

Χριστὸς Ἀνέστη! Christ is Risen!

Tonight is truly a consequential evening for the entire Omogeneia, because through this amazing Institution that we call, “AHEPA,” the interests and issues important – even essential – to our community are being put forth in the Halls of American Power.

We rejoice not only in the members of our Greek-American and Cypriot-American Families that walk those very same Halls, but we also applaud the remarkable men and women who bring the issues near and dear to our hearts before the lawmakers and representatives of our Government.

Those issues resonate within the hearts of every Greek Orthodox Christian in America. Whether we speak of the rights and liberties of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the fifty-year wound of the illegal Turkish invasion that still bleeds on the Island Nation of Cyprus, or the security of the Aegean and the sovereignty of Greece, we stand together as Hellenes and Philhellenes.

We stand together as a phalanx of righteousness for our spiritual, cultural, educational and political traditions. And this is precisely why the AHEPA Biennial Congressional Banquet – now in its 46th iteration – is so vital.

I want to congratulate all who have made this remarkable event possible and all who are contributing their presence this evening. The fact that the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Affairs is now a mighty 94-member strong council, representing both sides of the aisle, is a stunning accomplishment. It testifies to the tireless activities of AHEPA and other Hellenic-American interests, and to the awareness in the Halls of Congress of both the strategic and symbolic relevance of Greece and Cyprus to the world today.

The civilizational importance of the Hellenic world and its legacy in no way diminishes the contributions of all the other cultures, religions and traditions. In fact, it provides the clearest lens through which all others can be viewed and appreciated for what and who they are. Hellenism is a crystalline experience that reveals the best and brightest within ourselves and others.

The acknowledgment in which we engage this glorious evening is much more than the individual representatives who have been honored – and they all were most

deserving!

The recognition extends beyond the honorees, encompassing the esteemed personages who presented the honors, and manifests among all who recognize the essential righteousness of Hellenic causes.

To prove my point, consider who were the presenters were for tonight's honorees:

The incomparable George Marcus for Congressman John Sarbanes with the "2024 AHEPA Socrates Award." And if you will allow me, Congressman Sarbanes, our entire community will always hold your late father, the ever-memorable Senator Paul Sarbanes, in the highest regard. For he incarnated the best of all Hellenic, Orthodox, and American values in a single life, and in an extraordinary career of public service. May his memory be eternal.

We also honored the following four with the "2024 AHEPA Pericles Award," to demonstrate their gifts of statesmanship and leadership:

Senators Marco Rubio and Richard Blumenthal, whose presenters were, respectively, Senator Chris Van Hollen and the past Supreme President, Nick Karacostas. And the Omogeneis Representatives Chris Pappas and Nicole Malliotakis, and their presenters were, respectively, their fellow Hellenes and Representatives, Dina Titus and Gus Bilirakis.

All of this is to say that there is so much to be grateful for and to be proud of this evening. We have come so very far on these blesséd shores that stretch from sea to shining sea. Hellenic-Americans love this great country of ours, because it has fulfilled the promise of democracy that shone forth from Athens twenty-five centuries ago.

My dear and esteemed friends,

May we be found ever worthy of our democratic way of life, and persevere in the hard and rewarding work of forging a more perfect union among ourselves – leading the way among the nations of the earth.

Thank you!

Photo: AHEPA

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